

MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY COMMISSION

COUNTY WIDE MANAGEMENT PLAN

FOR

AMITE COUNTY SCHOOLS

AMITE COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

2012-2021

INTRODUCTION: Amite County has 18 sixteenth sections with the Amite County School Board overseeing these sections. There is a total land area of 11,532 acres. Of this amount, 10,273 acres is growing timber and 1,259 acres is open. Based on percentage, 89% is timberland and 11% is open land. The objective of this plan is to outline steps, which if followed, will allow for full timber production on every acre of sixteenth section land covered by this plan. This plan was written for a ten (10) year period. This plan will have to be revised in 2022. It should be understood that the plan was prepared to be used as a guide and it can be changed as conditions warrant.

At this time, the cut cannot be regulated by growth completely. This is due to several factors that will be discussed in detail later. This plan provides a starting point to continuously bring this land into full production with regulated annual cut. At the present time, the average stand stocking is well stocked. Through improvement cuts, tree planting, and timber stand improvement work, growth can be increased to the desired levels over the coming years.

HISTORY OF FORESTS: The forest management agreement between the Mississippi Forestry Commission and the Amite County School Board of Education provides for the management of the timberland by the Mississippi Forestry Commission. The Forestry Commission is to act as the Board's technical advisor on all forestry matters. All work must be approved by the Board of Education prior to its execution. Work such as timber marking, TSI, burning, firelanes, boundary line paintings, and other work will be done on an actual cost basis.

In the past thirty years, a great amount of work has been done on these lands in an effort to get all forest acres into full production. These efforts have already begun to show their productivity in the timber sales that have occurred in the last ten to fifteen years.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES: Management objectives consist of four main points. The first objective is to have the forest managed for sustained yield of sawtimber. The second is to build up growing stock. The third objective is to get every acre producing to its full potential. The fourth objective is to continue to provide adequate game habitat while still producing good quality timber. The steps necessary to meet these objectives will be outlined in the remainder of this plan.

FOREST DESCRIPTION: There are three (3) main timber types which dominate the forest of Amite county. These are: pine plantation, pine-hardwood, and hardwood stands. The pine plantation type consists of approximately 7,954 acres which is 79% of the forest land in the County's school sections. This includes mature pine sawtimber, pine plantations, and pine reproduction. These pine stands consist mainly of loblolly pine and shortleaf. The pine-hardwood type consists of approximately 1468 acres which is 15% of the forest land. These stands contain pine with mixed oak, gum, and hickory. The pine-hardwood stands will be converted to the pine type upon maturity. The hardwood type consists of approximately 639 acres or 6% of the forest land and contains mostly water oak, cherrybark oak, sweet gum, hickory, and yellow poplar. These species are growing mainly along small streams and drains.

PRODUCTION AIMS: The primary goal is producing high quality saw logs in the shortest period of time and providing a sustained yield through the years of production. Pine-hardwood stands will be converted to pine as they mature. Attention will be given to leaving enough hardwood for game food. Leaving hardwood growing in drains and creeks will accomplish this objective. The timber on hardwood sites will be managed for production of high quality hardwood saw logs.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS-SILVICULTURAL GENERAL: The mature stands of pine will be harvested by dates listed in the cutting schedule. These stands will then be chemically site prepared, then artificially regenerated by planting in genetically improved loblolly pine. The pine plantations will also be thinned according to the dates listed in the cutting schedule. Upon maturity, these plantation will also be harvested, site prepared and replanted. The hardwood stands will be harvested by dates set in the cutting schedules. These stands will be converted to pine if considered to be a pine site. All sales, site preparations, and tree planting schedules are listed in the tables of the appendix. All management recommendations will follow Mississippi Best Management Practice guidelines.

FIRE CONTROL: Mississippi Forestry Commission has the responsibility of fire control on all the school sections. The Commission operates two (2) fire suppression units in Amite County. In the event of emergencies, other units may be called in from adjoining counties.

Dispatching of fires is done by Central Dispatch located at the Southwest District Office in Brookhaven, Mississippi at 1-888-823-3473. Most fires are reported by adjoining landowners or by MFC air patrol.

INSECTS AND DISEASE: At the present time there are no real problems in the area. The best prevention of insects and disease is a healthy vigorous stand of trees. A close watch must be kept to detect an outbreak of insects and disease. If an outbreak occurs, the area will be controlled by the use of emergency timber sales.

UTILIZATION AND MARKETING: All marketing will be in accordance with the schedule in the appendix except for emergency sales caused by storms, or insects and disease. These cutting schedules may be amended due to market conditions. In cases of regeneration harvests, timber may be cruised by Mississippi Forestry Commission employees. All timber will be sold on a lump sum basis except for thinnings. Pine plantation thinnings will be sold on a per ton basis. After cruising, the forester in charge will compute the volume of all products. Volumes will be computed using Doyle scale with appropriate form classes. The Assistant District Forester in charge of public lands will prepare the prospectus for the sale with the District Forester's approval. The Amite County Board of Education will advertise the sale. Period of advertisement will be a minimum of 21 days as required by law. The Forestry Commission will send sample contracts to buyers in the area of the sale. All bids must be marked "Bid" and sent to the Amite County School Board, Liberty, Mississippi. The successful bidder will be bound by the terms of the contract. The Forester in charge will make periodic checks of the cutting operations to ensure compliance with the terms of the contract.

The Board of Education will be billed for the work at the completion of the timber sale. A minimum of 15% will be placed in an escrow fund for forestry work of any approved type. When more funds are needed, the Forestry Commission may request the Board of Education to place additional funds in the escrow account, which is not anticipated. These additional funds may come from timber sales or the general fund.

PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS: Boundary lines that are established have just been re-painted and will be maintained on a 5-6 year cycle. Some sections may require surveying to establish property lines that are in question. Some sections have old fences for boundary lines and these may not be correct. Firelanes will be installed and maintained on some of the school sections that have young pine plantations where a history of wildfire problems occur. This work will be approved by the School Board and performed by the Mississippi Forestry Commission employees. Contract work will be limited to site preparation spraying, tree planting, and TSI work. Firelanes, road work, and repainting boundary lines will be done on an as needed basis.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES: The term "Best Management Practice" refers to a practice or combination of practices that is determined to be the most effective, practical means of preventing or reducing the amount of pollution generated by non-point sources to a level compatible with water quality goals.

Public land management can generally be divided into three categories as follows:

- (1) General Forest Management consists of hardwood brush control with chemicals, prescribed burning, firelane construction, boundary line painting, and woods road maintenance.
- (2) Timber Harvesting – This is the cutting and removing of forest products. Basically, we will be having regeneration harvests and pine plantation thinnings as listed in the cutting schedule found in the appendix.
- (3) Post Harvesting – This is an activity carried out as a result of harvesting and conducted after the harvesting has been completed. These activities

will include but not be limited to site preparation (chemical or mechanical), regeneration work, quality vegetation management and road or firelane construction.

All work on public lands will address pollution matters on upland, bottomland and wetland sites. All work will be planned and carried out according to Mississippi's Best Management Practices Handbook.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES: All public lands will be managed in accordance with the current laws and regulations governing both plants and animals that are considered threatened and/or endangered. Prior to any management activity, the area will be surveyed for any known threatened or endangered species. If any species is found, the area will be managed in accordance with the guidelines published for that particular species.

HISTORICAL, CULTURAL OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL ITEMS: Any historical, cultural, or archaeological item that is found on public lands will be identified, located, marked and preserved. No silvicultural practice that will damage or destroy these items will be conducted on the site. Sufficient area around the site may be excluded to insure that the site will not be damaged. Items will generally consist of old monuments, grave sites, Indian mounds, etc.

IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE: During the ten year life of this plan, the following work is scheduled to improve the long range condition of these school sections for producing quality sawtimber.

- 1) Regeneration Harvests – 3,655 Acres
- 2) Pine Plantation First Thinnings – 2,450 Acres
- 3) Pine Plantation Second Thinnings – 2,328 Acres
- 4) Site Preparation: Chemical and/or Burning – 3,554 Acres
- 5) Tree Planting – 3,554 Acres